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Church Principles for Lay People

HOW TO PRAY

A STUDY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER



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HOW TO PRAY
A STUDY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY
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OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE

HOW TO PRAY

I

AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE

THREE are rightly many books on the Lord's Prayer. A traditional interpretation, more or less fixed, now attaches to it because of its constant use through the Christian centuries. But, besides this rolling up of a sacred tradition, each generation must find in it what is especially applicable to its own needs and aspirations. Indeed each individual, so far as he thinks and feels for himself, must find in it what no other person has found. It is for ever new. To strike off from our own experience what its words mean to us is perhaps a help to bring the Lord's Prayer into that great freedom by which the Holy Spirit takes the words of Christ and shows them unto men today.¹ The old truth

¹ *St. John* xvi. 15.

HOW TO PRAY

remains; the new truth is revealed. Thus the ancient words ring with the teaching of an ever living Christ. We may say one to another, "The Lord's Prayer means this to me; what has it come to mean to you?" When we have all told our best convictions, we shall still know that depths of meaning, never yet sounded, lie within its divine calm.

Before taking up the petitions severally, a few words may profitably be said about one or two problems which are sometimes perplexing, and then a word or two about ways to use the Lord's Prayer.

I

The Lord's Prayer is recorded in the Gospel according to St. Matthew and in the Gospel according to St. Luke. The form in St. Luke is a little shorter, and otherwise differs in slight details from the form in St. Matthew.* Scholars think that the form in St. Luke may be earlier, since the tendency

* These are the words as given in the Revised Version:
St. Matthew vi. 9-13. *St. Luke xi. 2-4.*

Our Father which art
in heaven, Hallowed be
thy name. Thy king-
dom come. Thy will be

Father,¹ Hallowed be
thy name. Thy king-

¹ Many ancient authori-
ties read *Our Father, which*

of liturgical use is towards enrichment. That there is variation is indication that the prayer at first was more or less fluid in expression, but always catching the essential petitions which our Lord taught. As the prayer is introduced in St. Matthew, He did not say, "In these words pray ye"; but, "Thus," or "After this manner pray ye."‡ Accordingly there was no disloyalty to Him in the variation. It is possible, as some commentators point out, that, as our Lord repeated the prayer to different sets of

‡ *St. Matthew vi. 9.*

done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day¹ our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from² the evil one.³

¹ Gr. *our bread for the coming day.*

² Or, *evil.*

³ Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

dom come.² Give us day by day³ our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.⁴

art in heaven. See Matt. vi. 9.

² Many ancient authorities add *Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth.* See Matt. vi. 10.

³ Gr. *our bread for the coming day.*

⁴ Many ancient authorities add *but deliver us from the evil one (or, from evil).* See Matt. vi. 13.

hearers, He might not always have used exactly the same words; so, that, so far as the necessity of the case goes, the versions in St. Matthew and St. Luke might both be literally His words.

We cannot help asking why in only two of the four Gospels so important a teaching as the Lord's Prayer is recorded. We need not find difficulty in imagining why it is not recorded in the Fourth Gospel; because the Fourth Gospel, written late in the Apostolic Age, was supplementary and interpretative. There was no need to record a prayer used wherever Christians lived. It is somewhat more difficult to tell why St. Mark did not record it.¹ Perhaps, since his Gospel was brief and concerned chiefly with events, he thought it, even in the early period of Gospel records, unnecessary to repeat what was on the lips of all Christians. Moreover, doubtless a small volume containing this and other teachings of our Saviour was in circulation when St. Mark wrote—the foundation in Aramaic (the dialect spoken in our Lord's day)

¹ *St. Mark xi. 25* seems quite clearly "a reference to the Lord's Prayer or the early teaching connected with it." (See H. B. Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 261, n.)

of our present Greek Gospel according to St. Matthew.

II

People are sometimes disturbed because the Lord's Prayer is not wholly original with the Lord Jesus. In both language and thought it strikes its roots into the traditions of His race. Much of it can be traced to the Old Testament; but writings later than the Old Testament give us phrases which are fairly close to it. It is possible that our Saviour knew Hebrew prayers in which are phrases like these, "Thou art holy and Thy Name is holy"; "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned"; "Magnified and hallowed be His great Name; may His Kingdom reign"; "Our God who art in heaven, assert the unity of Thy Name, and establish Thy Kingdom continually"; "And cause us not to come . . . into the hands of temptation."¹

¹ See A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 77; also Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, II. ii. p. 85 ff. It is difficult to discover the exact age of parallels commonly adduced, since the history of the Jewish Liturgy is exceedingly complicated. In *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 2822 f. will be found a learned compilation of the most remarkable and indisputable Jew-

Such coincidences as these no longer baffle the Christian scholar. He exults in them. He no longer sees our Master thrust into a foreign world, but coming quietly into a world of which He had always been Lord. "There is nothing in history," says a keen historian, "more suggestive than the convergence of the best ideals of all nations on that which was real, in Jesus of Nazareth."¹ In a brilliant essay George Tyrrell once demonstrated that Christianity had such power, in so far as it kept true to Christ, that it could take any form of religious expression, and, filling it with Christ's Spirit, renew it, transform it, make it Christian. "As the parasite," he said, "ends by consuming its host, so the Christian leaven, received into the bosom of paganism, tends to transform the whole mass into its own nature."² If this was true of Christianity after Christ's visible presence was

ish parallels. Dr. Nestle, the compiler, remarks, "Even if for the separate parts, words, thoughts of the Lord's Prayer parallels can be adduced from Jewish sources, as a whole this prayer remains unique."

¹ H. M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, I. p. 16.

² *The Spirit of Christianity*, in *Essays on Faith and Immortality*, p. 71.

removed, and true of paganism; how much more true was it of our Lord's appropriation of the experience of His devout fellow-countrymen in the days when He was teaching His Apostles face to face. Whether the words were old or new, their meaning for us is that He said them, stamped them with His approval, and put them into such combination that a world can never forget them, and shall ever be pouring into them, as into a mould, the aspirations and longings of those who in all ages stand nearest to Him.

Moreover, it is important to notice that even if individual phrases may be found elsewhere, the prayer as a whole is absolutely unique. Keim was not moved by sentiment, but true to his sharp critical instinct, when he wrote of the Lord's Prayer: "Pretty well all in detail reappears here and there in Jewish Talmudic prayers which, though later, are however not altogether dependent upon Jesus; yet the union of truly biblical simplicity with non-originality of details is a merit, and the perfection of the composition as a whole, with its blending of solidity and breadth, childlikeness and wisdom, vig-

our and humility, has not been reached by the Jews."¹ To say, therefore, that the Lord's Prayer is a reflection of contemporary devotion would be like saying that the Sistine Madonna is not original because its colours may be found in other Italian paintings. It is the combination of colours which made the masterpiece. It is the combination of human aspirations which made the Prayer of prayers.

III

We need to bear in mind how the introductory words, before the Lord's Prayer, in St. Matthew's Gospel, affect us today. When the Lord said, "After this manner pray ye," we know that He intended His followers not to use the exact words only, as a prayer in itself; but more especially to find in the prayer a model on which they could build their own specific prayers. They must feel, He seems to say, that they were always praying to One who wishes to be thought of, first of all, not as a Creator, a Ruler, an Almighty Force, but as a Father. And no prayers were to be selfish:

¹ *Jesus of Nazara*, tr. by Ransom. III. p. 337. See also Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I. p. 536.

Christ's men must in every prayer pray for one another: it is always "*Our Father.*" Very instructive, too, is the place of God in the model prayer. Of six petitions, half are about God—and the former half, at that. The second three petitions are fundamental requests in behalf of those who say the prayer. These instances show the way in which the whole prayer is only begun to be used when it is formally repeated, even though with the utmost loyalty to our Saviour. Its deeper significance is revealed when the spirit of prayer within us seeks expression in accordance with its principles, and so controls all our praying. Not only when we say our routine prayers day by day should we remember this: we should remember it also when in the agonizing crisis of our lives we seek God's companionship for our comfort and stay, or His guidance for the accomplishment of some most difficult duty.

IV

The Lord's Prayer ends with the clause, "Deliver us from evil." The Doxology,—"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for

ever and ever,—” was added by the Church, after our Lord’s earthly ministry, as an ascription suitable for liturgical use. As Christ promised, through the Holy Spirit, to be with His followers to the end of the world,¹ so we may feel that this Doxology is still His, though it does not belong to the original prayer. However, in a strict study of the Lord’s Prayer it may not be considered. It is, after all, an ascription of praise, and not prayer at all. It would be liturgically and historically better if it might be printed as a separate paragraph following the Lord’s Prayer. It would be a beautiful custom if after all the people had said the Lord’s Prayer in a natural voice, this Doxology might be sung.

V

Quite clearly there should be no public service in which the Lord’s Prayer is not used, and the best liturgical feeling seems to indicate that it should always be said by all who are present. Evidently it was at first given to a group of men to be used by the group with the consciousness of the whole

¹ *St. Matthew xxviii. 20; St. John xiv. 26, 28, 18, 21.*

body of followers, perhaps with a consciousness of the needs of all men everywhere in all times. It belongs not only to public worship at stated times, but especially to such high moments as Baptism, Holy Communion, Marriage, and Burial. The saying of the Lord's Prayer by all the congregation often lifts a wedding from its worldly aspect into the clear air of a religious consecration. Its saying at a funeral by all the friends of the bereaved over an open grave is often the deepest consolation: Christ's pledge seems fulfilled, "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst of them": His prayer on friendly lips makes the radiant Friend of Mary and Martha seem close,—as He is,—in the bitter hour.

A safe rule would direct one always to say the Lord's Prayer first among one's private prayers. It is a symbol of loyalty to Christ. It is, further, the symbol of our effort to frame the prayers which follow, in accordance with His rules, here concretely illustrated and illumined. It must, subconsciously if not consciously, purge our praying of its narrowness and egotism. It must redeem our

forgetfulness of the love which we owe God and His wide world.

There is legitimate dread of formalism, whether the prayer be used in public services or in private devotion. To escape formalism is supremely hard, however prayers be framed. The man who so far as I know has made the most abject confession of formalism used invariably *ex tempore* prayers. All of us, from the oldest to the youngest, were we quite candid, would confess that the mind too often wanders from the sacred words.

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

A devout child, with Latin imagination, once told me that she dreamed that there was a church full of people, and over the head of each kneeling worshipper was an electric lamp. She was told in her dream that if the people kneeling there were really praying, as the prayer was uttered light would come into the lamps over their heads. She looked, and only one light flashed in the darkness, and that was over the head of one very old woman. Such a parable as this suggests to the man who dreads

formalism how difficult is earnest and real prayer. The man who would refuse often to use the Lord's Prayer because he shuns formalism would probably, if he were consistent, soon cease to pray at all. Every one of us must rely upon the patience and the love of God, who remembers (as our Master reminds us) that we are but as children.¹ With the naturalness of childhood we may dare to ask Him to forgive our formalism when we try to be real, and we may dare to hope that He finds loyalty and love going up to Him through our imperfect efforts to repeat the prayer divinely taught.

¹ *St. Matthew vii. xi.*

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

II

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

I

THE first word of the Lord's Prayer opens the windows of the soul towards the radiant scene of human fellowship. Our Lord is teaching us that we may not be selfish in our praying. As we pray for ourselves, we at the same time pray for others. We and they are one, however diverse our longings, our sins, our virtues; however separated we may be in space or time.

Our Master is comforting us too with the sense of human companionship. We may be in some remote wilderness, fearful and distressed by the hollow silences; but when we say, "Our," in the great prayer, we know that we are compassed about with a cloud of human witnesses. The God to whom we pray is hearing not only our petitions,

but the petitions of uncounted multitudes. We cannot come near Him without threading our way through His court,— a court filled with humble people of every rank in life, on their knees, lifting weary, but triumphant, hands to Him. Or we may be in dense crowds of humanity: some, running wildly after pleasure; some, hard at work; some, lost in the love of a few dear ones;— and not one apparently aware of our problem, our perplexity, our sorrow, not even of our presence. Then, in an agony of loneliness we cry, “Our Father!” Instantly we become conscious that these indifferent strangers are indifferent strangers no longer. They have problems even as we; their perplexities are as baffling; their sorrows hurt quite as ours. We are given in that moment imagination. The vision of brotherhood opens wide before us. We are not alone. God is with us, and so are all they who belong to Him.

The word “Our” at the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer is not more a summons to the duty of unselfishness than to the comfort of human association. If God belongs to us all, there can be no limit to the association one with another, to the

fellowship, to the community of good. The duty is fused in the sublime consolation.)

It is commonly pointed out that the Lord Jesus never said "Our Father" when He Himself prayed. There is, of course, the definite record that He said, "My Father." There is also the record that when He spoke of Him to His disciples, He said sometimes, "My Father," and sometimes, "Your Father," but there is no record that He spoke of Him as "Our Father." All this is important. There is no doubt that it does mark the difference between His Sonship and that of all other men: it is a subtle distinction which became the legitimate basis of intricate definitions in later theology. Yet I cannot for one moment believe that Jesus Christ did not say the prayer with His disciples. The argument from silence is discounted when a simple logic tells another story. The Person to whom the personal pronoun "my" and "your" could be attached must belong to both, whatever distinctions exist in that possession. (Our Father" was an inevitable form of address for our Lord and His followers if they prayed together.) The loving intimacy which bound Him to

them forbids us to think that He should not have prayed with them. Had He not prayed with them I cannot see how He could have said to His father, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."¹ The barest imagination cannot fail to insist that He gathered them to Him and said with them, for them, in them, "Our Father."

And imagination and logic are not the only reason for such an inference as this. Again and again our Saviour refused to be separated from the humanity which He came to save. John the Baptist would not have baptized Him, had not Jesus our Elder Brother insisted. It was a baptism of repentance; but Christ had no sins to repent. It was only as He determined to be part of that repentant humanity, sharing, though sinless, the burden of their sins, that He could have been baptized by John. So throughout His life He refused advantages which might have been His: He was poor; He lived in a humble village; He had no influential friends; He was often weary with work; He died at last on a cross. That one who went so

¹ *St. John xvii. 21.*

deep as this into human nature should not have said aloud with His disciples, "Our Father," is unthinkable. He who would share with them the depths of humanity would certainly claim for them the heights also on which He stood. As a gentle Christian mother, teaching her little child to pray, identifies herself with the child, so He must have prayed with His little brothers. He must have said, "Our Father."

Therefore when we say the first word of the Lord's Prayer, we recognize ourselves as one with all the men who, now living, are consciously or unconsciously praying to the All-Father. We recognize ourselves as one with all the saints, heroes, and discouraged failures of the past. Down the years of the future we must be looking to see the children and the children's children to the distant generations; with them too we say, "Our Father." And at the head of all this multitude is the Great High Priest,—our Redeemer, Saviour, King,—our Brother, our Friend,—leading these voices of the ages, saying, "Our Father." Humanity has a Leader who leads from within. His Father is our Father for ever and ever.

II

To address God as Father was not new in Christ's time. The use of the title Father is rare in the old Testament: indeed it is used only seven times. Five times Yahweh is spoken of as the Father of the Hebrew people;¹ once in a promise made to David, Yahweh through Nathan said that he would be a father to Solomon, and Solomon should be His son;² and once a prediction was made that by and by men would pray to Yahweh as a father.³ There is, moreover, an allusion in the verse, "Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him."⁴ But there is no record in the Old Testament that men at prayer ever addressed Yahweh as Father. In the Jewish literature which survives after the Old Testament we find a growing use of the title. Moreover, whereas in the Old Testament the title makes God only the Father of the Hebrew nation, (for in the instances in which Solomon is mentioned, Solomon

¹ *Dt.* xxxii. 6; *Is.* lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8; *Mal.* i. 6; ii. 10.

² *2 Samuel* vii. 14.

³ *Jeremiah* iii. 19.

⁴ *Ps.* ciii. 13. (See also verse 4.)

is representative of the people), we find in the Apocrypha that God is beginning to be thought of as the Father of individuals.¹ Even so we are far from the meaning which the Lord Jesus threw into the Name, "Father."

Before speaking more specifically it is well to see what different meanings the word father may have in our own time. A great novel may reflect life better than any biography: sometimes the novel (when really at its best) is autobiography of the most searching sort. Remembering this, compare the meaning of father for the hero of *The Way of all Flesh* with the meaning which the same word has for the junior hero of *The Newcomes*. To Ernest Pontifex the word father stood for bigotry, tyranny, selfishness, unspeakable hardness; for Clive Newcome the same word stood for chivalry, honour, unselfishness, unspeakable love. If this diversity of content in the word is possible in nineteenth century England, it is still more possible when one thinks of different periods or of different civilizations in the same period. In feudal Europe the son was

¹ *Wis.* ii. 16; xiv. 3; *Sir.* xxiii. 1, 4; li. 10; *To.* xiii. 4; *Mac.* vi. 3.

practically his father's slave; in Europe today the father watches his son's eyes anxiously to gain, if he may, his approval. In China today a father owns his children and may if he will treat them like chattels. In a Christian home in China (which is a new civilization for that ancient land) the father is more responsible for his child's happiness than for his own. The mere saying of the word father amounts to little. It is the meaning which fills it which is all-important.

Therefore when we say that Christ found the title Father already applied to God, and only emphasized what already existed, we lose the whole message of His life. By His words and deeds He lived into the paternal relationship an entirely new meaning. That He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"¹ shows how fervently He was all the time and in every place revealing God's Fatherhood. That was His joyful and loving mission to men. To say that after the time of Jesus, men knew God to be forgiving, patient, eager for His children's reverent affection, was cold, compared with the larger and richer fact that henceforth men

¹ *St. John* xiv. 9.

were to see in the character of Jesus the exact details of the character of the Father of the world. No longer was He merely the Father of Creation; He was the Father of Grace. No longer was He expecting only obedience. Bare obedience could not satisfy Him. He willed to give love to His children; but He could not be satisfied with loving; He longed that His children, with absolute freedom of choice, should love Him. He wanted (the life of Jesus plainly shows) to have not servants, subjects, pupils; He longed for friends, companions, dear children.

And this meant that those who were taught by the Master to say, "Our Father," should stand up boldly to claim their sonship. There was to be no cringing, only the perfection of reverence fused with that love which casts out fear. They had inalienable right to come to God in prayer, because they were His children; they were children not by courtesy or figure of speech, but by His own will; and therefore by right. They were His kin, His very own. To show it, to make it impossible of denial or doubt, He gave His only-begotten Son to die, that the kinship might for ever be clear.)

How long has human nature been in learning the divine lesson of this all-embracing¹ Fatherhood! The paganism of the West, the heathenism of the East were claimed in large measure by the Lord of all religious aspiration; yet, as they surged again and again upon Christianity in succeeding centuries, they tended, now and again, to dim the confidence which Jesus gave. Partly through discouragement with their own unworthiness, partly through a vulgar notion of what pertained to supreme rulership, Christian men thus tainted with pagan or heathen influence, began to fear that they must approach the Father not directly, as of right by His will, but indirectly through the mediation of the saints, or through the help of the beautiful mother of Jesus. Then men felt that they could not confess their sins to God directly, but must seek the mediatorship of the Christian priest. In so far as men needed human assurance, the priest of right and necessity stood ready to give men confidence. In so far as men felt that this was the only way in which they could make peace with God, they had forgotten that the Saviour had taught them to say boldly, "Our Father." They had forgotten the

words of the mystic writer who said, "Beloved, now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."¹ They had forgotten, if they ever knew, that God is always longing for self-respecting, confident children, who come directly to Him with their troubles, their triumphs, their failures, their truest love.

All that "Father" means to the man possessed with the Spirit of Jesus is too great for words to express. But it means, among other wonders, direct and confident approach to a Father who is as tender, as interested, as loving as Jesus Christ. We come to a Father who wishes us to know that we have the august rights belonging to children of the Most High.

III

For a moment we must pause to reflect upon the tense of the address to our Father in heaven. We pray, "Our Father who art . . ."

There is a constant tendency to feel that God has been more manifest in the past than in the present. Our Lord accused His countrymen of garnishing

¹ *John* iii. 2.

the tombs of the prophets who had been slain by the ancestors of these same fellow-countrymen.¹ He accused them further of being exceedingly sensitive about what Yahweh had said to Moses and Elijah, but quite callous what Yahweh was saying through His prophet John; most of all to what He was saying through Him, His Son.² We read the accusations complacently, and straightway feel that we are living about two thousand years since God showed Himself to men. This is not true of all of us.³ It is true of a good many of us. We lack a vital belief in the God of the present tense. We forget the words of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."³ We forget the unlimited deeds of the invisible but ever-present God. We forget the Saviour's promises concerning the Holy Spirit.

There is of late an increase in mysticism. It is vague. It searches, more or less vainly, for adequate terms. But it is a genuine confidence in the God whose Fatherhood is in the present tense. It

¹ *St. Matthew xxiii. 29 ff.; St. Mark ix. 11 ff.*

² *St. John vi. 31 ff. etc.*

³ *St. Matthew xxviii. 20.*

studies the miracles of the New Testament, most of all the wonders of our Saviour's assuring words, to discover if it may, wherein these mountain tops of earthly experience may gleam again through the mists of our conventional Christianity. Mysticism has something more than a hope that the best that ever was on land or sea is part of human experience today, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; because God is for ever love,—the Father of the present tense.

IV

The concluding words of our address to the Father are, "in heaven." All that has gone before seems to make the Father so near to us that He might be thought of as only absorbed in our earthly environment. The plain intimation that He is always near us we must not lose as we think of the symbol of His transcendence. The Father whom we confidently approach is in heaven.

We sometimes think that heaven in ancient times always meant the distant, the inaccessible. When we address God as our Father in heaven, we make heaven near. It was not necessary that we learn

the roundness of the world and the consequent abolishing of a conception of hell and earth and heaven in a series of horizontal planes. The Divine Teacher had already implied the interlacing of what is heavenly with what is earthly. So when we speak of our Father in heaven, we are not thereby in thought thrusting Him away from us.

There were two conceptions in the beginning of the Christian Era as to what is divine. The Jewish idea of God so isolated Him from the affairs of men (to keep His righteousness untarnished) that it was difficult for the most reverent Jews to think of Him as intimate with men. This was the root of the difficulty which Jews found in the Incarnation. On the other hand was the Greek idea of God by which He seemed so exclusively immanent that He was lowered to the weaknesses, the foibles, and the sins of humanity. In so far as the Incarnation brought the divine close to the human, there was no surprise. The scandal arose when the Incarnate Deity was shudderingly separate from human evil, even to the point of death. Christ brought the truth in both these conceptions together

in the devout address, "Our Father who art in heaven."

Accordingly, while we approach our Father with the simple trust that belongs to childhood, we never cease to remember with awe the reverence which we owe to Him. He is our Father. He is our Father in heaven.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

III

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

I

TO the reverent fellow-countrymen of Jesus Christ the Name of God was so sacredly associated with the very Being of God that for a long period in their national history they would not even speak it. The name of a person was not, as with us, a mere convenience to separate that person in thought from other persons; and to summon him at need. The name of a person was the revelation of the person's character. It was the symbol of his utterance and expression in the world. Roughly speaking we may say that the name was the person himself; since it was the manner by which men became aware of his personality and identity. In the Book of Common Prayer this dignity is preserved by printing name with a capital letter whensoever it refers to God.

Where then do we find the Name of God? First, we find it in His world. From the flaming suns to the invisible insects we see the expression of His nature in what we call, for lack of a better name, laws. These laws tell us much about God, and we often say that He is the God of Law. The tenderness and beauty of the natural world are offset by its terrible power and ruthless inevitability. The revelation in nature melts into a stupendous mystery. But, all in all, it is one of the Names of God.

Then, we find the Name of God in men. In so far as men will open their hearts to God, God enters; and, through their eyes and hands and feet, He expresses Himself before the world of men. Even when men are not conscious of opening the door to His Presence, they yet admit Him without being aware who is the Stranger whose coming makes their hearts leap for joy. Probably every man is the medium for God's expression, for the life of every man is from Him; and no man can be so consistently stubborn as always to shut Him out. By his creation every man belongs to God. The late William Huntington was wont to say that

when he wished to turn to that part of the church which he felt to be most filled with God, he turned to the congregation. He found there the Name of God. He had adequate proof that the Holy Spirit lived in the hearts of his people.

God expresses Himself in nature and in men, but the complete expression of His character is in Christ. Christ is the Name of names; He is the Word of God. He that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father. In Him the confusing contradictions of the natural world find their authoritative interpretation. In Him the blurred reflections of the Supreme Being through the imperfections of humanity are brought together in the white light of a perfectly transparent medium. In language there is no such marvel as an absolutely accurate translation of a classic from one tongue to another. The delicate undertones of idiom cannot be snared in exact words and phrases of the new language. Even with circumlocution and commentary they may only be approximated; and then the concise force is altogether lost. Jesus Christ is God's Name perfectly translated from terms of heaven to terms of earth. The divine character is exactly

translated into human character; and nothing is added, nothing is lost.

II

Now we pray, "Hallowed be thy Name." If ever we have thought that this petition meant only, "Grant us always to speak Thy Name with respect, with reverence, with a hush in the voice," we can no longer think this enough. But it is a valid beginning, and therefore let us begin just there. It would mean much if before we take upon our lips the Name of God, we should stop an instant, and try to think what we are about to say. As Moses before the burning bush put off his shoes because the place where he stood was holy ground, so we might feel that with the naming of God we were consciously acknowledging His presence. We should be keeping the Third Commandment in a positive sense. We should never in any way, by carelessness or thoughtlessness, take His Name in vain. With each mention of it we should summon our whole nature to do Him honour. Thus at all times and in all places we should be practising the Presence of God.

We may think of a church building as not only formally consecrated to the worship of God, but as also saturated with the utterance of His Name in praise and prayer. We ought therefore to treat every church building with the respect due unto the Name of the Lord. Not only during service time, but before and after, all unnecessary conversation should be impossible. Even our thoughts should be collected. In mind and heart we should ascend into the courts of the Lord's House, to appreciate if we can that we dwell continually with Him.

(Good as all this is, it is only a beginning. To win an answer to the petition, "Hallowed be thy Name," we must enter into the awe of the Name of God, as His Name is spelled for us in His world, in His children, in His Son.)

As the world of outward sense is one of God's Names, so we must form the habit of seeing that He is there expressing Himself. We shall not be entangled in any shallow pantheism; but as we see the artist in his picture, the poet in his poem, the composer in his music, so we shall find God in His great picture, in His rhythmic verse, in His echoing

music. The ancient people who would not kill an animal for food without offering part of it as a sacrifice to the Creator, recognized that all life belongs to God. They were in so far hallowing His Name as written in nature. The right-minded fisherman or huntsman who will not take life, except as he would use it for food, or shield himself from danger, is also bearing witness, however unconsciously, to the sacredness of God's Name in nature. We read with disgust that Spinoza would amuse himself by putting flies into a spider's web, that he might watch the cruelty of the spider and the agony of the fly. That is wanton irreverence. As we watch the clouds floating over the sky by day, as we gaze at the stars in the infinite depths revealed by night, as we hear the wind in the trees or the water falling over the rocks, as we stand before the high mountain capped with its perpetual snow or before the sounding sea, we must think of God. The awe which belongs to the Supreme Creator must catch hold of our hearts and bow them in worship. We do not understand. But we know that

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform:

He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

The secret of the renewing power of the outward world is ultimately in the fact that, whether he knows it or not, the worn and tired spirit of man finds in it the inspiring witness of the Name of God.

Still further we must study, striving to see the Name of God written across the life of humanity. When we treat men with contempt, we dishonour the Name of God. When we use men who chance to be in our power for our own selfish convenience, and fail to give them in return what is their just due, we dishonour the Name of God. When we even think of them as less valuable than ourselves, we dishonour the Name of God. Jesus our Master made quite clear how much of the divine was included in the lives of certain neglected and despised people: He spoke of the starving, the unknown, the naked, the sick, the convicts; and then he said that any one who was truly kind to these for-

saken people would be kind to Him. A deed for them was a deed for Him. His own life was the illustration of what could be done for men, if one would only see in them the Name of God. He believed in people, both men and women, whom no one else in His time believed in, and they became what He believed them capable of being. The Name of God which He read in them, was so far transfigured that all men saw it. The unreliable, the useless, the wicked became more than generals, more than kings, more than saints. They were in their faces and in their lives proclaiming the Name of the Lord. Through them the Name of God had been hallowed.

Most of all we must see God in Christ. For He is the one exact Word or Name of God,—“the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”¹ We hallow the Name of God through Christ when we recognize His authority to lead us, when we read His commands with an open mind and dare to let them cut asunder all our habits and previous convictions, when we dare to believe that He lives and through the Spirit speaks to men

¹ *Hebrews i. 3.*

today,—sometimes to mankind in a mighty group, sometimes to the humble but great leader, sometimes to the unknown saint hidden from the world. Hallowing the Name by reverent demeanour and by gracious words is essential, but deeper still is the hallowing of the Name by that love which keeps the commandments of the Incarnate Lord.¹ The Father's Name is glorified by the fruit of the disciples' life issuing in the keeping of these plain commands.² When we pray, "Hallowed be thy Name," we are praying that we may be like Christ, so that if possible we may say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."³ To be as Christ, each man to his own time, to live as He lived, to die as He died, to love as He loved,—that is the highest honour any man can render to the Name of God. His Name is then indeed hallowed.)

III

The words, "On earth, as it is in heaven," quite certainly belong to each of the three petitions:

¹ *St. John* xiv. 15.

² *St. John* xv. 8.

³ *Galatians* ii. 20.

" Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done."

There is a central peace wherein the Name of God is hallowed. There is the perfection of praise. But until God's whole creation echoes that perfect hallowing of His Name, the appreciation of God's glory is incomplete. We are not praying therefore for a goal which has not been won: the heavenly have attained it. In imagination we know what it is to hallow the divine Name; and so in one of the highest moments of Christian worship, we cry, "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High. Amen."

THY KINGDOM COME

IV

THY KINGDOM COME

I

“**T**HY kingdom come,” was an old prayer of the Jews. To them it meant, “Down with the Romans! Up with a new King,—a Cæsar for the Jews!” We now know that the Jews alone in the Roman Empire retained an intense national feeling, resenting absorption into the Empire.¹ All other peoples evidently were proud to be admitted into the great world-fellowship of which the glory of Rome was the visible sign. Rome had skill in making the conquered nations feel that it was better to be merged in something greater than a na-

¹ See H. M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, I. p. 49: “Though Judea was a tiny province, the Jews were the greatest people of the East and no unequal match for Rome herself. . . . The Law, the temple, and the Messianic hope kept Israel a living nation—the only living nation left inside the Empire.”

tion. It was somewhat as when the petty shop-keeper a generation ago found his profit larger when he had become a member of a trust. His sigh for a past independence was lost in the satisfaction over certain advantages in co-operation. But the Jew never recognized these so-called advantages. He longed for independence. The holy city was profaned by the presence of haughty Roman soldiers and proud Roman governors. The Jews were the only nation of which Rome had any fear; for it was the only nation which still had a real national spirit. With a leader of the capacity and ideals of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Napoleon, Jerusalem might easily have set up a successful kingdom which would have rivalled Rome. One does not understand the more worldly aspect of the Messianic hope unless one remembers with what vigour men in Judaea were praying, "Thy kingdom come."

There were devout and far-seeing Jews who were longing for the more spiritual gifts of a redeemed Israel. Marvellous sentences concerning the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah must have come to them again and again with a vague imagination of what might be. But even for them, even for the wise

Simeons and Annas, there was the dream of a kingdom greater than the best in the past, more famous, more splendid than the fame and the splendour of David and Solomon. They too prayed very concretely, "Thy kingdom come." It was a theocracy, but this theocracy was to have an outward and exceedingly substantial expression.

II

It is not difficult to see what the petition, "Thy kingdom come," meant to the disciples. First, it meant the day when they believed the Lord Jesus would cast off His simple life of teaching, and would allow Himself to be made their king. James and John asked for seats of honour when He came into His glory;¹ there is no doubt that they were thinking that in a few months at latest they would see their dear Master on a throne in Jerusalem. It was part of our Saviour's hard task to teach them that His kingdom was more than physical; it was spiritual, and for that reason more real, more powerful, more surely indestructible. But I see no reason to think that His plain words ever prepared

¹ *St. Mark x. 35 ff.*

them for Good Friday. The desolating shock of it was that they had been praying, "Thy kingdom come," with a hope, a confidence, that Jesus to the ordinary man would seem to be a king like Cæsar. The disciples themselves would know the inward quality of His kingly life; but his kingship was to have the trappings which would warn all men that He was a king.

After the vanishing of the Lord from the earthly scene, the disciples looked forward to His visible return, that He might be acknowledged as the King of the World. There is no question that the visible kingdom of their Master was chiefly in their minds when they prayed, "Thy kingdom come."

They evidently expected Him during their lifetime. When the Apostles were nearly all dead, and He had not yet come, they began to give a new meaning to His promise to return and be with them for ever. The Fourth Gospel is particularly emphatic in declaring that He was to return through the Holy Spirit. The Church never ceased to look forward to His visible appearing; but such a document as the Fourth Gospel shows that the prayer had partly been answered already in the conscious-

ness which the primitive Church had of the nearness of Christ. Questions quickly arose for which the Apostles had no authoritative answer in their memory from the Jesus of Galilee; but through the Holy Spirit they knew His living decision. At the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem, James said, in summing up the decision, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us . . ." ¹ And St. Paul wrote a little later that nothing could separate him and his friends from the love of Christ.² They prayed for the greater and greater manifestation of the kingdom of God; but it was coming every day, before their very eyes.

III

After this rapid historical survey we are ready to ask the most important question. What do we ourselves mean, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

So scrupulous a scholar as the late Charles Augustus Briggs declares that in the New Testament the kingdom means the Church;³ that is, "Church" is the later synonym for the early New Testament

¹ *Acts xv. 28 ff.*

³ *Church Unity*, p. 36.

² *Romans viii. 35 ff.*

term, "kingdom." Not all scholars would make the words exactly equivalent, but I think none would fail to acknowledge that Church has at least very much of the content of kingdom. In this sense, then, the petition would be an appeal for the advance of the Church. We ask not for the magnifying of the glory of the institution, certainly not for its wealth or dignity, but for an increase in its service to the world. We are praying that more teachers, doctors, nurses, and clergy may go far and wide, wherever the need is known, and that, going, they may wholly forget themselves in the completeness of their ministry. We are not waiting for an answer which may appear in another world or in another era, but we pray God to save this world here and now by the immediate coming into it of the love, the sacrifice, the wisdom of His kingdom, the Church.

We are not, however, limiting the petition to this immediate aspect of it. There is in every sound nature an instinctive belief "in the good time coming." As the Jews looked forward to the Messianic kingdom, as the early Christians looked forward to our Lord's quick return, as men weary of

earth have sung of heaven, so men of vision have dreamed that on this earth social conditions should so improve that poverty and crime should cease; that education should so spread and so be spiritualized that it would do its share to make a happy, efficient, and noble world; that labour and capital should so comprehend their mutual duty one to the other that peace and love should reign among men and nations; that Christian sympathy should so open the heart of Christian disciples that they would find a way to bring all men who love Christ into one Church. These are some of the things of which people on their knees might think when they pray, "Thy kingdom come." It is part of our faith in God that we believe that "the best is yet to be." We may take Browning's hope for the individual and apply it to the Church. We are still in the morning of the times: we are still in the Early Church. Remembering this, we may sing in the name of the Church, "See all, nor be afraid."

IV

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we need to remember that there is no renovation of the

mass which does not proceed from the renovation of individuals: "the golden age cannot be made out of leaden men." While men are dreaming of wonderful schemes which will shortly bring industrial prosperity, or social righteousness, or Church unity, we must remind them that these hoped-for panaceas are nonsense unless men are made over one by one. It is only the new creation of each individual which can make the kingdom of God come in its ultimate perfection.

The Saviour once said to His followers, "The kingdom of God is within you." The words might be translated, "The kingdom of God is among you"; they would then mean that He Himself is the kingdom, since He was then among them. We may put the two translations together, and make them say, "Let Christ into the secret places of your individual lives, so that in you the kingdom, as leaven, may have its chance to spread from life to life till humanity is filled with the Spirit of Christ, and the kingdom of God is fulfilled."

And this thought brings us to the refrain which belongs equally to the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come on earth, as

it is in heaven." Where Christ is, there is the light of heaven. In Him the kingdom has come. In Him, as the perfect man, as an inseparable part of humanity, as the new creation, the kingdom has come to humanity. We therefore are not praying for a far-off illusion. The kingdom is here, even as we pray for it. And yet it is ever coming. We shall pray the prayer for ever, and the petition will always be in process of being answered. The kingdom came when Jesus came to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Jerusalem. The kingdom came when Telemachus jumped into the arena, and ended the gladiatorial combats. The kingdom came when Shaftesbury, by his courage, put an end to duels. The kingdom came when slavery ceased in America. It shall come when we have Church unity. It shall come when the nations live in perpetual peace. It shall come when men cease to speak exclusively of their rights and when they think exclusively of their duty to others. It shall come when all men everywhere seek after God, and, finding Him, give their whole lives to Him, till the unity and the joy and the love of mankind are lost in the light which radiates from the throne of God.

THY WILL BE DONE

V

THY WILL BE DONE

I

“**T**HY will be done,” means to many only abject resignation. It is negative and uninspiring. There are times, doubtless, when we have been travelling confidently upon our own way, and come suddenly upon some insuperable obstacle which, by pain and disappointment, warns us that we must turn our steps to go up a steep, rough path under God’s guidance. We think our way pleasant and happy; we think His way full of grief; and so we identify the doing of His will with abject resignation.

Resignation to His will is only part of the petition, but it is an important part. And we must see with care just what sort of resignation it is for which we may properly pray.

During the late war brave young soldiers said

repeatedly that when they came into the thick of the danger, they lost all fear; because, as they picturesquely described their sensations, until the flying shell came which bore their name and address, nothing could hurt them, and when it did come nothing could protect them from it. So they were as peaceful as if they were children playing in a summer meadow. That was calm submission; but it was not consciously at least submission to a heavenly Father. It was, so far as one can see, and so far as they were able to see, submission to fate. It may be that subconsciously they had resigned themselves to God's protection. Many soldiers, we know, gave themselves into His loving care with full and loyal consciousness. I am not now speaking of them. I am thinking only of those who submitted, as they believed, to fate. Clearly, "Thy will be done," does not mean submission to fate, however heroic such submission may be.

Imagine, again, three men in a boat upon a storm-tossed sea. The boat is leaking. One man is rowing towards the quiet water of a harbour; the second man is swiftly bailing the water from the boat; the third is on his knees praying, saying, "Thy

will be done." Very likely the other men are praying too, but the man who is ostensibly praying is doing nothing else. If all are praying, there is a radical difference in their interpretation of "Thy will be done." The man who leaves his prayer unaccompanied by action means by, "Thy will be done," submission to any forces of nature into which he may suddenly find himself dashed. The others, if they pray it, mean a stubborn contest with those same forces of nature by which one shall not be their victim but their conqueror. Our sympathy easily tells us that, "Thy will be done," does not mean submission to natural forces. These forces, we conceive, may quite likely be placed before us to make us thwart them. This violent contest of man with nature may be God's will for us.

Finally, imagine a mother whose son has been entrapped by vicious older companions into a life of sin and shame. Her dreams for her boy are shattered. He who might have been her pride, is her disgrace. She thinks of the men who ruined him; she laments and weeps; and then, as in piety, cries out to God, "Thy will be done." That submission is little short of blasphemy. It is not God's

will. Certain vile men are the gods to whom she yields. God's will would be not submission, but the most fiery war. If she could, it would be God's will that she should so confound their devilish plots that even yet her son escape. But if that is impossible, it is, we may be sure, God's will that she make war against the wild beasts to which her son's tormentors belong. She may not save her own son; she may be the means of saving the mothers of other sons a sorrow which has come to her. "Thy will be done," will mean for her anything else perhaps; but it can never mean submission to the carelessness or wickedness of men.

To what or to whom may the submission be given, if not to fate or nature or men? Clearly only to God. And not to God disguised, in any way, as fate or nature or the world-self. It must be to God as revealed by the Master who taught this prayer; it must be to God as our Father — the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is a Father who loves mankind, and who loves men one by one. He knows our wants, our sorrows, our gladness. He sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. He remembers us all. To be resigned to such a

Father is to be sure that what is best for us one by one, for us in our varied relationships, for us all collectively, has been done. We may not have what we would most like to have, but we are not praying to a Father who cares for some of His children and not for others. In an intricate world we are imagining what it is to find our place loyally and unselfishly, to bear well our disappointments, to be serene in grief, and to be humble in success, knowing that so we shall best understand what the will of God means for the ultimate happiness of the whole world, including all the myriads of whom it is composed.

Thus our submission gives us the sense that God is the Master of His world. We all believe this theoretically; practically we often doubt it. The savage suspicion sometimes grips us that God is not absolutely supreme. Some form of dualism, which has often marred the history of thought in the Church, lays hold of us. No real peace can come to a man who does not know in both heart and mind that God is the Father Almighty. Love that has no rival, that uses all the conditions which love has created, but is never at the mercy of conditions

from without,—such love is the secure foundation of our happiness. To submit to such Almighty Love, whatever the darkness through which we pass, is to have the one consolation which can know no defeat. Such human resignation is to make one a sharer in God's victory.

II

To say "Thy will be done," with its full meaning, takes us quickly from any feeling of mere submission, however exultant that feeling of submission may be. To think of the will of a loving Father in heaven and in earth carries us far up into visions of beauty and joy. We rise with expectation to discover, if we may, the plan of God for His children everywhere, most of all for His own love to them. It would be presumptuous for the finite creature to search the details of the plan of the Infinite Creator, had not the Divine Authority commanded us to pray for the fulfilment of that plan; and everything in the life of Christ informs us that our prayers are not to be blind formalities, but intelligent co-operation: we are to love God not only with the heart; but with the mind also. To pray

that God's will be done assumes that we strive to know what His will is.

We need, first, to know what His will is for us individually. Each of us must ask for that white stone in which his new name is written, which no man can know except the man who receives it. We should aim to know His will for us day by day and moment by moment. When the disciples were anxious about the impending doom of the nation which their Master foretold them, and their possible failure to meet the treatment to be meted out to them, He warned them, "When they shall deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."¹ The independent man is always the man who depends on constant guidance; but he receives guidance from no human source; he is not looking fearfully from eye to eye to catch an indication of what would be a majority vote; his attention is fixed only on that inner voice, which he recognizes as the voice of the Spirit of God. The man who plans far

¹ *St. Mark* xiii. 11.

ahead what he shall do on a certain day and allows no unforeseen circumstance to divert him from his little purpose, is not independent but silly. The man who is ready for any emergency, meeting it without surprise or confusion, because he feels the instant leadership of the unseen God, seems to his fellows detached from men's wavering opinion and is a gloriously independent man. He is always saying, "Thy will be done."

God's will for the individual is inadequately understood if the individual is content to stop with awaiting knowledge of the divine will for emergencies. There must be supreme moments in every life when God makes known His will for the whole career. The same men who had been warned to await the catastrophe before deciding what to do, had already been called to a unique vocation which was to be the on-going purpose of all their years. So it is the will of God that every man,—early if possible, late if he have been dull in former time,—learn of God what He would have him do for a business, a profession, an art, a trade. One sometimes hears the sentence, "A man ought not to give himself to the Ministry of the Church unless he is

conscious that God has called him." That is true. What the speaker usually forgets is that a man ought not to be a doctor, a carpenter, a painter, or a banker, unless he is conscious that God has called him to be one of these people. It is woefully unfortunate to find a clergyman who has no sense of vocation. If the world were clear-seeing it would be exactly as scandalized to find a man in business who had no sense of vocation. The crucial year in the boyhood or youth of a man is when he decides what he shall do with his life. The pitiful creatures, who drift, without any compelling unity to give their lives direction, are not always men who have not devoutly tried to find God's will for them; but they have not dared to shut their ears to the pleadings of unheroic, indulgent parents, or to the low murmur of worldly friends, or to their own whisperings about unnecessary sacrifice. If God is to reveal His will for a man's whole course, He must have undivided attention, and then undivided loyalty. If those two conditions are met, God will give each man and each woman a vocation which shall be His will for that person from youth to old age. And the consciousness that one's whole

life is according to His will thereupon makes the days and years golden threads in a pattern whose secret beauty only God can now know, but which shall be revealed in due time for the common felicity of mankind.

As we see the will of God enlarging from individual moments to the whole life of a man, so we must see again the will of God enlarging to include a divine plan for the whole fellowship of men in all the world. As, in a dream, we stand upon the high places of human experience and look out over the nations, we must ask what God means each nation to contribute to the ultimate purpose of the race. We think that the Hebrew nation contributed the high ideal of righteousness; Greece, we say, was the revelation of human beauty; Rome stood for law; England embodies duty; America is the nation running every risk to provide opportunity. Germany, we used to say, was the expression of human efficiency; and then it lost its responsibility to God, and sought its own will; but perhaps it will even yet have made its divinely appointed contribution. We stand upon another high place in the kingdoms of the world, and we gaze

into the future to know God's will for the Church. We see now divisions and prejudice and narrowness and self-complacency; and then the vision opens, and we see the new Jerusalem, the Church as God would have it — the Church at unity in itself, free as the blue of heaven, holy as Christ is holy, filled with the love of God. We see it not only at home, but also abroad; we see it not in some places only, but in all places where men live. The wise of the earth laugh and scoff: Christians, they say, can never be great enough, unselfish enough, good enough; so the Church must always be about what it is today. No man who honestly prays, "Thy will be done," can halt at such a timid prophecy. The Church shall be what God wills it to be; and we know that His will for it is not only all that we have dreamed for it, but unguessed excellences immeasurably beyond. It is the bride of Christ, and shall be all glorious for Him.

III

When we have contemplated God's will for the individual and then God's will for His whole universe, we must make one more audacious venture:

we must ask how the little one may recognize that he has a part to play in the universal plan. To ask such a question apart from God would be impertinence; to ask it in the fear of God is sincerest reverence. It is really impudence when we are self-conscious and decry trying to take part in the universal plan of God; a genuine humility will ask that we may do our tiny share, if He wills to accept it, and then that we may be forgotten. Nevertheless the topmost satisfaction of life is when we pass from the narrow contentment with our own careers, and gain the superb trust that in some way, known only to God and our single selves, we are falling into some rôle which He wishes us to play in order that by just so much His full plan for the world may sweep on towards victory.

When we add the words, "On earth as it is in heaven," we are left to no vague surmises. We know exactly how God's will is done in heaven. We know this from the way Jesus Christ did the will of His Father. In no aspect of this rising into the will of God do we see more clearly how to learn the heavenly way than in our Saviour's resignation of His own will for His life into the Father's will for

the universe. Again and again, in the brief Gospel records, we catch glimpses of this exchange; but the moment when we perceive it in its most convincing light is the agony in Gethsamane. Our Lord prayed, "Father, take away this cup from me."¹ That was the human longing within Him to be free of the pain and disgrace which loomed before Him: to meet them meant the defeat of the private life of Jesus of Nazareth. If we were speaking of any one else we should say that His career was about to crash upon the rocks which His enemies had prepared for His fall. The vast human dread of failure was wringing the cry from His patience. And then He must have seen the other vision. He looked away, we think, from His home in Nazareth, from the friendly house in Bethany, from His happy carpenter's bench, from His loving friendships, from all that was intimate and private, and He saw His Father's plan for the universe,— and then His own place in it.

The pictures, both in painting and in literature, represent the moment as a moment of abject submission. I am sure that submission was lost in

¹ *St. Mark* xiv. 36.

exultation. The soldier in a world war sees once and again, as the shells drop about him, how sublime is the cause for which he is fighting, and there-upon tingles with desire to give his utmost, even his life, that he may prove how much he cares. I know this from the lips of soldiers. Now I am sure that Jesus our Master, knowing how infinitely blessed was the cause of His Father for all the ages and for all the worlds, desired above all to give His utmost — His life, His love, His will — that God's endless purpose might receive the one essential gift which both God and man in Him must make for its fulfilment. All that is greatest in human lives points to the perfection of greatness which is in Christ. Therefore we rightly interpret the scant words of the Passion in the light of what we know from the highest experience of humanity everywhere and always. Do we not know, therefore, that when Christ said, " Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,"¹ His head was thrown back that He might look up into the Face of His Father, His eyes gleamed with the approaching triumph, His step was

¹ *St. Matthew xxvi. 39; St. Mark xiv. 36; St. Luke xxii. 42.*

firm and light as He strode down the hill with the soldiers — He more soldierly than any of them, He alone aware of the end of the march! That He reverted to the anguish of His plight during the hours that followed, that cries of defeat came from His parched lips on the Cross, is only what we should expect, from our knowledge of the saints who have followed Him. Often we hear the apology, "You think I am brave because of what I said yesterday; I cannot always maintain that height; again and again I am lost in the blackness of the valley of despair." Even here, I believe, Christ was tempted in all points like as we are.¹ But the sense of triumph was His in the tragedy, even as at times it is given to some of us, in a faint way, to feel ourselves rising out of our private trouble into the great plan of God for His universe, wherein our sacrifice is accepted as a link in the long chain which reaches between His love and the day when all is to be fulfilled.

Whether our day be placid and glad, or whether it be crowded with torment, if it be filled with our finest living, may we be conscious that our careers

¹ *Hebrews* iv. 15.

are not isolated, insignificant fragments, blown about upon the winds of accident and chance, but that they are being deftly fitted, by God's gracious pride in us, into His advancing plan for the universe. We ought to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," with the flash of Christ's triumph shining in our eyes, with an intelligent understanding that we count, with the trust that if we truly give ourselves to His purpose, God will use every bit of us for His plan, with the joy (which only He can give) that we are His beloved children for ever.

So may we say with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength, "Thy will be done."

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

VI

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

WITH the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer we turn from petitions concerning God to petitions which concern ourselves. Having said: "Hallowed by thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done"; we cannot pray the succeeding petitions without the consciousness that all that affects us personally is transcended by its place in God's eternal purpose. If we and our needs are subordinate, we and our needs are also dignified by a usefulness which exceeds all human boundaries.

I

In the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," we naturally dwell first upon the word "bread." Bread is the commonest need of life. By this we know that we are intended to ask for

the common things. Nothing which causes us anxiety is too trivial to be included in prayer to a God who wishes His dependents to treat Him as a Father. By placing all our needs before Him we show the simplicity and reality of our childlike attitude to Him.

We further tend, in this thoroughness, to wipe out the division of life which would separate the secular from the religious. All things thereby become religious. We are careful not to lower the religious things to the secular level: rather, we would bring the secular things up into the religious plane. As all comes from God, so all should be dedicated to His service. When we pray for the common things,—even for the commonest, namely, bread,—we are, by the deepest instinct within us, bringing all things up to the life of God. This suggests, too, that we must be natural in prayer. Very disturbing are those little manuals which attempt to define just what we shall pray for. When the human heart utters a cry, the most natural goal for that cry is the heart of God. When we use our microscopes and see the rhythmic law in the least particles of His creation, we know that His love

goes into the minutest of details. Nothing, to Him, is common. All is His.

We ask, perhaps, why out of all the myriad common things of life bread was chosen as best identifying the secular with the religious. What is there especially religious about bread? On the very surface, we recognize that it sustains the life of service. One of the interesting developments of modern knowledge is the weighing of food values. An ounce of one sort of food has a value in nutrition which is, by a proportion now known to us, greater than the value in nutrition of an ounce of another sort. We know also what kinds of food minister to different parts of our bodies, so that we may use such varieties as shall keep all parts of our organisms in most wholesome efficiency. Most of us know these interesting facts only in a general way; but when a sick man is recovering from fever he may by his skilful physician be given such foods as he can easily and gladly take, and in just such quantities as shall give him the maximum possibility of strength. When he is past his convalescence, he is in full vigour, and need not slowly attain his former strength. All this care in ministering to the

body is not a mere personal convenience: it is a solemn religious duty, so far as one can command it, that we may all be fitted as quickly as possible to go on with our warfare in the army of Christ, under His leadership working out the purposes of God.

II

We have all discovered that Christ's words are literally true, "Man shall not live by bread alone."¹ There is food which no man can see which is indispensable in a sound body. It is no exaggerated figure of speech to call contentment a food. Certainly without it the foods which can be seen do not minister as they should to the body. A blithe and even temper is a food. So is a sense of humour. So is brotherly kindness. So is a long list of unseen qualities which experience teaches us to think of when we repeat, "Man shall not live by bread alone."

Thus we come to appreciate our Saviour's offer to give the living bread.² He boldly told men that He Himself is the bread of life. The discourse in

¹ *St. John vi. 51.*

² *St. Matthew iv. 4.*

which these words are embedded has from early times been associated with the Holy Communion. The instinct which so interprets it is valid; but this discourse applies also to all other ways in which Christ gives Himself for men's sustenance. We learn what these varied ways are by the testimony of men.

"Ill and o'erwork'd, how fare you in this scene?"

was the question the poet asked; and the answer came at once:

"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
"Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*"

To think of Him has been food to many a man. Once a man schooled himself to think of Christ each time he heard the clock strike: so he was made strong to resist temptation. Reading the New Testament has always been a vital means whereby men have fed upon Christ. They have so become acquainted with His words and deeds and with His influence upon others, that He has been revealed to their souls as the Living Bread. Many have found the sustaining power of Christ through Christ-filled

men and women. In the hour of trouble the human comforter has come, and then often has seemed to fade into the background as Christ Himself shone forth to give His supreme consolation: through the best people whom we have known, Christ has often been our heavenly bread to make it possible for us to live on.

III

It is with no forgetfulness of these varied ways in which Christ becomes to us the living Bread that we turn to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the pledge and confirmation of all our intimations that Christ is our bread. The Early Church sometimes decided that the living bread in the Holy Communion was the only bread we asked for; and, for a time, the word which we translate "daily" was understood to mean "supersubstantial," referring directly to the mystic food. Though this exclusive use is not borne out by either scholarship or Christian tradition, we must certainly include in the meaning of "bread" not only the common bread of every day, but the spiritual bread with which our souls are fed in the Lord's Supper.

There is no doubt that in the primitive age the Lord's Supper was more intimately connected with the ordinary meal than it has been since. We see in St. Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians why the change had to be made for a frail human nature.¹ With the protection to reverence which the change has brought, there has been a corresponding loss in the instructive lesson that the Lord's Supper hallows all eating and drinking. For that reason the bread used in the Sacrament ought always to be the bread of common life, to remind us that in the Great Feast the commonest and the most exalted meet. Moreover it will help us to think when in the morning and at noon and at night we touch the bread of our physical life we are touching also that spiritual bread which Christ at all times gives us for our whole strength. Really all eating and drinking is sacramental: but the Lord's Supper is necessary as the high moment when we make this clear to ourselves, and when we are, by all the words and acts of the Service, by our own meek obedience to His command, and by His own most gracious promise, brought especially into the sacred joy of

¹ *I Corinthians xi. 20 ff.*

His presence as He gives Himself to be our perpetual bread. The most reverent, the highest conception of the Holy Communion must never lose its reverence or its height; but we must see to it that this Feast be the leaven for all our feasting, that it strike deep into all our common eating and drinking, in cottage and in palace, in mining camp and in general's tent, in little boats on the sea, and in canteens just behind the front after a savage battle, in the business man's lunch room and in the holiday camp in the woods. Not for one moment may we lower the Sacrament of Divine Love, but we may and must raise all our common fellowship about the family or friendly board till it reaches the height where it would be fitting to invite as our guest the Lord Jesus. No austere guest will He be. The laughter shall go on. Little children will smile into His face and be unafraid. The talk will be the talk of simple, homely things; and He will be interested and He will care. He will come down into the trivial and the common, that He may take all things up into His own glory. Yes, we pray, "Give us our daily bread, even Christ; give Him to us in the Sacrament, and give Him to us in our

common meal; give Him to us for our constant and unfailing Food."

IV

Very likely there is no more difficult word in the New Testament than the Greek word which we translate "daily." Primitive Christians, using the prayer morning and night, asked in the morning for bread for that day, and at night asked for bread for the morrow. We may retain this thought by accepting the marginal note in the Revision of 1881, "our bread for the coming day." In other words, we are asking for just enough.

One cannot help thinking of our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount concerning our trust in God's provision for our needs: the heavenly Father who feeds the birds of the air would surely feed His human children. Therefore He said, "Be not anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself."¹ When we ask bread for the immediate day, we are provident, but not anxious. We are thinking of enough for efficiency, and not for exaggerated desires. A number of

¹ *St. Matthew vi. 34.*

years ago one of the ablest and most honourable members of our national Congress announced that he would be obliged to give up his national service, in which he was never more needed, and return to his profession, that he might before he ended his career earn a considerable sum of money for his children. It was a pitiful illustration of being anxious for the distant days; it was out of harmony with the Lord's Prayer. For his inheritance to his children was justly in a righteous fame and not in money. Why could he not have served his country till he could serve no longer? The need for his skill in government was pathetically evident. And his children, even if poor, would go on to perhaps better lives if they were aware of their father's sacrifice, and were compelled to work quite as hard as he had worked. More children fail to be as good and great as their fathers because they have too much, than because they have only barely enough, or even too little. They ought not to make it fantastic to teach their children to say, "Give us this day our daily bread."

When we talk of the difficulty of the times, and chatter about the luxuries which once we had, and

which now we must forego, we ought to have some brave poor man come to laugh us out of countenance; best of all would it be if we should try to think what the Carpenter of Nazareth would say to us. To a rational man who feels the thrust of reality and who feels the encumbrance of mere things, there is often the wish that he might throw all his possessions out of the window, and start life over in bare rooms, and those few and small: he so longs to see the trees, and the face of a friend, and God, that he would sweep all the playthings out, and be unembarrassed by their mockery and futility. The monks were not fools when they took to their cells. The tragedy came when the monasteries became so clogged with possessions that there was no room for God. A man ought to call up his sense of humour and think twice before he talks about the things he cannot do without. He can do without everything that is material except his daily bread,— and God commands him to ask for that.

As a corollary to this truth we might profitably consider how far a man should think of his future work. The boy who explains to his teachers that

he need not do his lessons well, because he is going into business when school days are over, is apt to fail in business as well as in school. The boy who asks to do thoroughly his task for the coming day is the boy who can be counted on in the long future. The discontented dreamers admit that they are slack now, but they say, "Just give me what I want, and see what I can do!" Ordinarily no chance awakes them. A distinguished leader, who employed young men, was wont to say, "I can always tell the man who will succeed: he does more each day than is expected of him."

Another corollary to this thought about what we shall ask God to give us day by day, is the definite need which especially applies to each one of us. Let us suppose that a man has a bad habit, into which he falls again and again, and from which, after each fall, he prays frantically to be delivered. He prays never in all the future to fall into his sin again. Would he not have better chance of success if he prayed each day that on that day he might not yield to his weakness? Our failure in life often comes from tackling too much of it at once. I think it was an old Caroline bishop who kept himself a

bachelor by resolving each day that he would not be married on that day. We smile; but I believe he died in that state of life to which he felt that God had called him. If we are worried about our health or our safety, we shall be more assured of either in so far as we trust God and ask Him for just so much of either as may fit us for a strong man's task on the coming day. So shall we be prepared for long life, filled with hard work up to old age. Why should we not pray for all things just for the coming day!

One more corollary I add. There are two ways of asking God for help: one is directly; the other is through one of His servants. Sometimes a man or a woman who has always hitherto had enough, becomes desperately poor. The want is kept secret. I am not thinking of almost professional beggars, who appeal to every known source of supply, and make no effort whatsoever towards self-support. I am thinking of the self-respecting people to whom the revelation of their need is agony. These needy ones are not fair to a loving God when they will not tell one of His disciples their penury. Before any such accuses God of not answering his prayer

for bread for the coming day, let him bethink him whether he has completely uttered his prayer.

V

Finally, the daily bread for which we pray is not mine; it is "ours." If we all prayed, with full hearts, that all of us should have enough for the coming day, such pitiful poverty as I have just mentioned would not long be undiscovered. The people who give to every brazen beggar on the doorstep, and who think that thereby they have fulfilled their responsibility to the hungry, have little imagination to seek the really poor who live up many flights of stairs and who in well-brushed, though threadbare, clothes courageously pass them on the street. We need too that still larger imagination which will so improve conditions that every man who is honest and will work will surely have enough. When changes are swift, they are apt to be hectic; and while many become rich, many also sink into deeper want. We need too that sensitive imagination which will make us ashamed to have so much that we shall be the envy of some and the despair of others. Each man may so use what

God has allowed him to have that he will be a co-worker with God in answering the prayer for daily bread; he will be God's minister in giving it to those who on that day have it not.

We think gratefully of men and women who in methods which are truly practical, have lived out in the sincerity of their lives the petition, "Give us this day the daily bread of all of us." There are men and women in settlement houses devoting all their time to knowing what are the needs of the poor. The day nursery is teaching mothers how to care for their children. There are men like the philanthropist Charles Booth, in London, who have gone to live in the homes of the poor, that they might know at first hand, exactly how the poor live, just what their joys and sorrows are. They demand facts not theories. There are men like Jacob Riis, in New York, who have planned open spaces in the city density, and who have created understanding and sympathy in all men's hearts. There are men everywhere who are honestly praying, in the remembrance of a common humanity, with an out-reaching brotherliness which forgets no one, "Our Father . . . give us this day our daily bread."

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS
AGAINST US

VII

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

THE noun in the first clause of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer is, in St. Matthew, "debts"; in St. Luke, "sins." The noun or its equivalent in the second clause is, in St. Matthew, "debtors"; in St. Luke, "every one that is indebted to us." These are literal translations of the Greek text. To make the meaning which was clear to our Lord's disciples clear also to the Gentile world and to later ages, it is evident that "debts" and "debtors," eloquent with significance to a Jew were not enough. To a Jew debt was the most picturesque synonym of sin. We know from St. Paul's self-accusations how sinister and overwhelming the thought of indebtedness to God became to a conscientious man of his race, because by no possibility could he of himself pay the debt

he owed to God. In days when men were imprisoned for debt, the word was perhaps more nearly adequate. St. Luke, as a writer for the Gentiles, used a synonym which the Gentiles would more easily understand,—the word “sins”; while still retaining the figure of the debtor in the second clause. The difficulty with a literal translation of St. Luke’s version of the petition is that we lose the balance which is, for example, perfectly maintained in our Lord’s Parable of the Unmerciful Servant,¹ wherein, after the servant has refused to forgive his fellow-servant’s debt, the master of the unforgiving man refuses to forgive his debt. The problem for an accurate translation is to secure a word which will at least plainly include so strong a term as sins, and yet will be applicable to the relationships between man and man.²

The words of Christ in the immediate context in St. Matthew’s account supply the solution: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Fa-

¹ *St. Matthew xviii. 23 ff.*

² The way sins might be spoken of outside the direct relationship to God is shown in the prodigal son’s confession to his father, “Father, I have sinned against heaven *and in thy sight.*” (*St. Luke xv. 21.*)

ther will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”¹ Therefore it was a happy union of scholarship and clearness of meaning which translated the literal word “debts” of St. Matthew into “trespasses,” and the word “debtors” into “them that trespass against us,” as we find in the *Prymer* of 1538,² and as we find still in the Book

¹ *St. Matthew* vi. 14 f. Also *St. Mark* xi. 25 f.

² The word “trespasses” in the Lord’s Prayer was brought into the “Prymer” from Tyndale’s version. That Tyndale so translated the petition is in itself an argument for retaining the word “trespasses,” for his boldness in reaching the intelligible word is notable. The idiomatic excellence of our English Bible is pre-eminently due to him. Those who came after him were only revisers, and where they have unnecessarily changed his words, they have made the Bible less clear to the people. Examples of his skill as a translator appear in such instances as these: “And the Lorde was with Ioseph, and he was a luckie felowe” (*Gen. xxxix. 2*); “When they had said grace” (*St. Matthew xxvi. 30*); “He sent forthe the hangman” (*St. Mark vi. 27*); “He sent to the tenauntes a servant” (*ib. xii. 2*); “There was a certayne ryche man, which . . . fared deliciously every day” (*St. Luke xvi. 16*); “Which for one breakfast sold his birthright” (*Hebrews xii. 16*). Tyndale was at once a scholar and a literary genius. He was the first to translate the New Testament directly from the Greek into English; and the dew of the early morning is on his English prose.

of Common Prayer. This general liturgical use is probably the simplest means of bringing to our minds what the Lord taught.

I

We ask to be forgiven the sin, not its punishment. A good deal of religious effort, both before and after our Saviour's earthly ministry, was spent upon trying to appease a supposedly angry God, that the punishment might be cancelled. Bewildered sinners tried to buy God off; some placed their babes in the fiery arms of Moloch; others gave their children to the waters of the Ganges; and still others paid large sums to shorten the time which God might rightly expect of them and their relatives in Purgatory. These conspicuous examples tell what people often pray for, if they are inadequately taught, or dull of mind and heart; doubtless even many who pray the Lord's Prayer are thinking of the punishments of their sins more than of the sins themselves.

It must be understood definitely that we are asking God to take away our sinfulness.

II

To the end that we may desire to be rid of our sins, we must recognize them. Misdemeanours, crimes, vices, faults, mistakes, offences may all be considered as bounded within strictly human relationships,—the state, the family, the general public, the gentry, the decent, the scholarly, or the experts. But sins instantly bring us to the contrast in which we as sinners stand to God. We have done something which makes us feel, by so much, separated from God. In extreme cases, where men let all the sanctions of their lives go to the winds, where they do base deeds day after day and care nothing because they do them, they cease to say their prayers. By a sound instinct they have no wish to keep up an intimacy with a Person whose very nature is inconsistent with the life they are leading. When our Master said, “The pure in heart . . . shall see God,”¹ He was announcing a fact which is true from the beginning to the end of time. Conversely we know that so far as the individual life has sin in the line of its gaze, the vision of God is blotted

¹ *St. Matthew v. 8.*

out. The man who has any kind of conception of God's austere and complete righteousness is sensitive to his own shortcomings, to his own weaknesses, to his own ugly traits. He is at no pains to disguise them. He plays with no pretty euphemisms. He beats his breast, and speaks frankly of his sins.

The best concrete evidence for these general statements is in the biographies of the saints, most of all in their autobiographies. Even the casual reader recognizes how extraordinarily good they were. We blush to think how far we are from their standard. Yet there are long pages where the saint dwells with what we think exaggerated horror on some deed which we would dismiss from thought without compunction. In the road he picked up an apple which had fallen from a tree growing just inside a stone wall. Or, he was so intent upon a problem of philosophy that he neglected to smile at a poor man who passed him on the path. Such minute examination into one's peccadilloes seems to us unnecessary, tending to be unreal, almost a pose. But the sincerity of the whole book is evident. We know as we read that to the saints the reality of God imposes upon men the necessity of acknowledg-

ing the reality of their sins. They are like the publican in the Lord's story who was justified in praying to the Father in heaven.

III

When a sane man recognizes God's spotless goodness, when he recognizes that he has done something which makes him feel that he is farther from God than he was before he did the deed, and when he recognizes that it is his greatest misfortune to allow even to himself any widening of the distance between him and his heavenly Father, he knows that he must ask God to forgive him. The normal relationship which should exist between God and His child must be restored.

We find the best illustration of the readjustment of a partially broken relationship in the treatment which a mother metes out to her disobedient child. The child is punished, because he must be taught that he has done wrong. If the child understands why he is punished, any shade of resentment is quickly lighted by the knowledge of his mother's love. A famous English schoolmaster who was a rigid disciplinarian always invited the boy whom

he had caned in the morning to have tea with him in the afternoon. The good mother, I fancy, invariably tries to show more love than usual in the afternoon to the child whom she has punished in the morning. All this is a reflection of the love which God shows after, or even within, His chastisement, as He makes known that love to the forgiven soul who pleads for His forgiveness.

We are now ready to see why the man who seeks forgiveness of his trespasses thinks little of the inevitable punishment. Punishment is sometimes concealed. As one studies the inevitability of laws in God's world, one is inclined to believe that no sin is without its punishment. The form may be quite different from what one expected. The man may have dreaded public exposure, loss of the respect of his friends; he may not be aware that the sin has made him callous, has blunted the sharp edge of his honour. He may have overlooked a punishment more grievous than he had expected. Punishments when understood are seen to be part of God's love. They are signals; just as the slight illness reveals a weakness in the human body which now being known can be watched: accordingly the man, thus

informed of his weakness, may so guard his health that he may long outlive in years and usefulness the men who never have attended to the warnings God has given them by the way. So punishments for our spiritual breaking of God's laws may recall us to the greater risk opening before us. To be separated from God is our one awful fear. We thank Him for giving us temporary fright and pain that He may keep us close to the consciousness of His love.

To ask God's forgiveness for our trespasses is, further, to disown them. We thereby say to ourselves and to Him that they are foreign to us. What we desire, therefore, in our prayer, is that we may be assured by God Himself that He by His absolute authority separates them from us. Sometimes people like to believe that they are not responsible for what they have done: they blame some cruel, overbearing influence, seen or unseen, and say that they themselves did not consent. A man who makes such a plea has surrendered his personality, and is less than the beasts,—he is nothing but a stupid machine ready to be manipulated by any knave or fool that passes by. The right motive

hidden in such folly is the desire to be separated from the hideous deed which has been done. The only way to accomplish that is to confess it to God, then to disown it, and finally to know that God has answered the prayer.

God's complete forgiveness comes when the power is won which Christ bestowed upon the sinful woman, when He said, "Go, and sin no more."¹ We do not ordinarily, I fear, conquer the besetting sin, upon God's first assurance of forgiveness. Perhaps He must forgive us again and again, before we try our hardest, and become successful in giving that form of gratitude which He most desires, whereby that sin is permanently separated from our lives. In any case, we must admit to ourselves that it is not enough to have a glow of happy relief after we have acknowledged our trespasses to God, after we have felt anew that He receives us as the father of the prodigal received the dazed boy in our Lord's parable. We must fix in our souls the firm determination to show that we accept the forgiveness, wholly receiving the heavenly power which is then bestowed, so that we shall live always in the

¹ *St. John* viii. 11.

Father's house and go no more among the brambles and the swine, for ever.

A few words ought to be said about the people who think to keep themselves free of sins by saying that there are no such things. Sins, they protest, dwell only in imagination: to get rid of them is to forget them. There is a kernel of truth in this, a very small kernel. That truth is that we are much more likely to be good if we fill our thoughts with the good and the beautiful things of life, than if we dwell on the sordid and uncanny things which we wish to avoid. The most noticeable outcome of such a theory of sin is that it cultivates a marvellous serenity. But while certain faults become less conspicuous, the discriminating can detect certain other faults which our Saviour put down in a black list; such as self-satisfaction, minimizing the virtues of people with different theories than their own, failure to see the people who are in trouble, a drawing up of skirts and a shutting of eyes when going through what others call scenes of horror, lest their peace be withdrawn, something akin to the spiritual selfishness of the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray. An old saint travelling

on the railway was approached by a smugly religious person who asked him in an oily voice if he had found peace. "No," thundered the saint, "I have found war." The placid faces of those who ignore the reality of sin are truly wonderful: but serenity is too dear a price to pay in a world where God has allowed tremendous risks, where watchfulness is essential, and where many men and women are clearly in the most wretched plight, in body, in mind, and in soul. No one need be astonished if the saints, who have gone deep into experience, are scandalized by the false security of good people who will not see what lies across the path which leads up to God's forgiveness.

IV

Blindness such as I have just described becomes the more culpable when we remember that we are not praying, one by one, "Father, forgive me"; but we are saying, "Our Father, forgive us." We are members one of another. Unquestionably some men are better than others, even when conditions are quite the same. "Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, one is left. Two women

shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.”¹ With the brotherhood which our Lord both taught and lived we know that we cannot be saved in the truest sense by saving ourselves alone. We are saved, strictly speaking, only so far as the world is saved with us. The love by which Christ gave Himself to save the world, is a love which He meant the disciple to share with Him. We cannot be serene when we think that, though we have been fairly decent, there are thieves, murderers, liars, and a whole catalogue of disastrous souls all around us. A little reflection would lead us to ask ourselves if perchance one of these scoundrels might have been kept from his sad course if we had only given him a bit of encouragement when we had the chance, or dropped a kindly word of warning as we saw him begin to slip downhill, or even had dared to say that we loved his father and for his sake cared very much that he, the son, should be like him. If only we had shown in some tiniest way that we cared,—what a difference there might have been! Several years ago a young man in a small New England village went to the devil. Death cut short his mad

¹ *St. Matthew xxiv. 40 f.*

career. The neighbours gathered for his funeral. The minister shocked these neighbours by telling them over the boy's poor body that they were to blame for his failure and death. The conditions of the village made his defeat not only possible, but easy. So the man of God arraigned the people who forgot that they had responsibility for their brother.

Therefore, when we come to church, we confess our sins all together. Each one in the congregation asks God's forgiveness for all, including himself. A man has no pharisaical citadel into which he withdraws to plead for sins more gross than his own. The sins of the others are some way his. He must bear them. Whatever goodness he may have he offers for their weakness; whatever goodness the others have he seeks for his own infirmities. He cannot be satisfied to be saved alone. He must stand forgiven among brethren who are also forgiven.

In an earlier part of this book¹ I touched upon the question whether our Master prayed His prayer with His disciples. This petition about forgiveness

¹ Pp. 21 ff.

is the one clause which makes many commentators feel that He could not have said it with them. Of course we know that He Himself had no trespasses for which to ask God's forgiveness. But everything in His life points to the fact that He never meant to keep His perfection for Himself. How the disciples must have thrilled with strength if they heard His strong voice saying with them, "Forgive us"! He was not separate from His brethren. How can we for a moment doubt that He who bore our sins upon the tree, bore them also in prayer!

v

The condition on which we are taught to base the plea for our forgiveness is, "As we forgive those who trespass against us."

The first principle to grasp here is that it is God's nature to forgive. We know what God's nature is, not only through the Bible, but also through the people who most transparently allow Him to shine through their lives. The father of the prodigal son was waiting for his son every day. The forgiveness was there: the boy needed only to come and get it. No one ever knew a genuine

mother who did not have forgiveness overflowing in her heart for the misguided son who had brought to her sorrow deeper than death: he needs only to come and get it,—nay, she is going out in unutterable love in every conceivable way to find him. The late President Hyde somewhere has told the story of a physician whom he knew during his student days in Andover. This doctor's son was killed, apparently by a railway locomotive, for his body lay mangled on the track. The doctor, with trained observation, saw marks on the throat and knew that his son had been strangled; but he said nothing. One night the murderer came to the doctor's office to confess his crime. The doctor said: "You need not confess. I know." "Then," said the murderer, "what are you going to do about it?" "Nothing," answered the father. "I have only one request to make of you. Promise me that every day as long as you live you will repeat from your heart the Lord's Prayer." Forgiveness like that is a spark struck off from the forgiveness of God. We begin to dream what an astonishing love God must have, awaiting us, that He can inspire in His faithful servant forgiveness so transcendent.

What then ever prevents God's forgiveness from taking effect in men? The sun is always shining; but that it may be effective in heat and light and life, there must be atmosphere in which its rays may kindle fire. That God's forgiveness may be realized in us, we must have a certain quality of atmosphere in our lives to receive it. What that atmosphere is, Christ tells us when He teaches us to say, "As we forgive those who trespass against us." The atmosphere is the forgiving spirit.

The hard, relentless life is the most to be feared by any one who loves that life. The prosaic good people of Christ's day were distracted by the friendships He made. People with fixed, self-assured characters He passed by. He admitted to His intimacy people like Zacchaeus and the Magdalen, people whose past was quite wrong but whose present was tender and open, ready for God's forgiveness. They received what the formality and hardness of the respectable could not receive.

Sometimes friends have explained to me with elaborate emphasis that though in general they will have the forgiving spirit, there is one man or one nation not to be considered for a moment in such forgive-

ness. They revert to the Old Testament righteousness which required an eye for an eye. The only way to redeem a man or a nation is Christ's way. Forgiveness must be received as well as given. If it is used by the one for whom it is intended as a bauble to be played with and tricked, the sin remains. But if even a little of Christ's spirit shines through it, if it is recognized as the magnificent gift it is, drawn from the life of God, it will be received. A ransomed soul, a ransomed nation will come forth out of the fire.

However all this may be for the person who is, by the pleader in the Lord's Prayer, forgiven, there can be no least doubt what is the sole condition by which the pleader himself may receive the forgiveness of God. He must forgive as God in Christ forgives. He must banish every atom of hardness and every scrap of self-complacent justification for it. He must soften his heart. He must let in the love. He must forgive all men, even his enemies, as he would presume to accept the forgiveness of our Father in heaven.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

VIII

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I

THE sixth, and last, petition of the Lord's Prayer is a paradox. Between the two clauses of the petition we must understand words in the heart of the man who prays, expressing a growing realization of the deep complexities of life. We might imagine the petition to take a form somewhat like this: "Lead us not into temptation. But if thou dost, deliver us from the evil."

There is the same paradox in our Saviour's prayer in Gethsemane. He prayed the Father to take the cup of suffering from Him; and then — after how long an interval we cannot know — He begged the Father to let the Father's will, not His, be done. Here too we must imagine words which need not be spoken to be understood: "Father, let this cup

pass from me. Nevertheless, if it be thy will that I drink it, thy will not mine be done."

It is the fault of much of our thinking about God and the Bible that we strive to explain away all difficulties, all contradictions, all that seems to us illogical. The man who has lived intensely, who allows himself to go far in different directions where contemplation leads him, prefers to leave some convictions unfinished, rather than to round them off and fit them into a neat system. He knows that life is not smoothly rounded out; many of one's greatest days end in mystery which can only be left in faith to God. So in His own words the Lord Christ is teaching us that Prayer is not a dead, exact, and logical proposition, but a reality quivering with life. Therefore we are not afraid to enter its mystery, because amid all the baffling confusions of daily experience, we are, as little children, trusting ourselves to the perpetual guidance of our Father in heaven.

II

That we are told to pray about temptation shows us how cautious we ought to be in approaching it.

There are two outstanding facts about it which we must face.

The first of these facts is that temptation makes for strength. The lad hemmed in by the protection of a home is at length sent forth into the temptations which beset the life of a school. He meets other boys, he comes into contact with ideals lower than he has known at home, perhaps also with many ideals which are higher. Then, he is sent into still larger freedom, when the school is exchanged for the college; the temptations are greater, and the protection is almost wholly the strength which he has acquired in his own character. It is rational to say that the boy could not be the strong man he is becoming, had not his parents had the courage to send him out of the secure shelter of the home into constantly wider areas of experience and temptation. Temptation is evidently a necessary element in the accumulation of strength in human character.

The other fact which we must keep before us is that temptation involves startling and often tragic risks. One never can be quite sure what man or woman will come through the temptations of life

unscarred, or what one will come through a complete moral wreck. The risks are real risks. We are not playing at dolls. The fire is real fire, and burns what it touches. The sharpness of the blade is acute, and cuts cruelly what it slashes. The poison is real poison, and kills.

Now if temptation makes us strong we may accept it as a gift from God. But it is so perilous a gift that we must straitly obey the command of Christ when he said, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."¹ We cannot trifle with it; we cannot go knocking at its door, telling ourselves that it is gay and interesting to see all of life; we cannot relax for one moment our caution. The readers of negative books which tear down old sanctions, and construct nothing to put in their place, are fools. They play with the temptation to be Bohemians. The people who indulge wild imagination through suggestive art, or bad books, or loose plays, or the inner secracies of their own minds, are fools. They forget, if they ever knew, the easy descent from suggestion to a picture hung up in the mind, then pleasure in looking upon the picture in

¹ *St. Mark* xiv. 38.

the mind, then the thought that it is not so bad after all,— and then the deed itself is done! The one Perfect Man “was tempted in all points like as we are”;¹ He knew by experience what ghastly risks lurk in every temptation, and He therefore taught His brethren to beseech God to lead us not into temptation. God is invited to watch with us lest we enter into temptation. The watchfulness is so requisite, so urgent, that no human strength is enough. We cry to God to reinforce our watchfulness.

III

The petition about temptation clearly implies that God gives us temptation. If we accept the truth that life is not probation, but education, we cannot believe that an element in our education so fraught with destiny as this should be in the fluctuations of chance or in the ultimate power of any strength but His own. We may conceive that in God's bestowal of human freedom, He allows men to tempt one another. In so far, they, and not He, become responsible. But the method of education

¹ *Hebrews iv. 15.*

is His, just as the huge dangerous school-house of the universe is His; and we do Him scant honour when we try to put the responsibility for the method of His education elsewhere. Being little and ignorant, we tremble for the outcome of the plan. But in our best moments we know that the outcome will make our fears ridiculous, and the divine plan will be justified even to the Father's frightened children.

Profound comfort is locked in the words of St. Paul: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."¹ We feel at once how closely the loving Father watches over us. However indirectly we may think Him responsible for the temptation, He sees to it that the help is always greater than the trial. We cannot say that the temptation so overwhelmed us that we could not escape it. The helps He throws about the boy in college, for example, are legion: his mother's letter, reminding him of her love and confidence; the amazing belief of a revered teacher assuring him that

¹ *1 Corinthians x. 13.*

he has a great career ahead of him if he will work hard at a certain problem for which he has incipient genius; the good opinion of a certain group of people—he couldn't bear to have them shrink from him; the beckoning of his own sense of honour; and the voice of God's Holy Spirit in his conscience. One of the reasons for man's watchfulness in the presence of temptation is that he may know how rich an array of helps the Lord God is putting immediately before him. God is providing him with the power to get the strength which the conquest of temptation will yield to him.

IV

Thus we come to the final words of the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil." There is little doubt that in the New Testament, as interpreted by itself and by the early Church, this section of the Lord's Prayer is a petition for deliverance from the evil one.¹ Whether the interpretation be "Satan," as the leader of evil forces, or "all that is evil"

¹ For an exhaustive discussion of the critical aspect of this question, see F. H. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, pp. 71 ff.

(personal or not) is so bound up with the growth of Old Testament doctrine and the influence of neighbouring nations upon the Hebrew people, that the candid scholar is very modest in giving his decision. Probably the Church has not gone far from the meaning of our Lord in making the prayer read, "Deliver us from evil." It then may include reference to any degree of organized evil, under the leadership of a king of evil, but it is not limited to such a reference. We are asking for deliverance from evil wherever found. There are several principles connected with the whole matter which we must keep clear.

In general, we know that the strongest incentives to good come through personal heroes. Each man who is at all fortunate has come into contact with some one who has stirred him to the bottom of his soul. Under God he owes what good he has accomplished to this reverence for his hero. Now if this is true on the positive side it is no less true on the negative side. The most dangerous appeals to evil are not abstract arguments in books, but the living examples of people who have the power of attraction. A wrong idea of any sort is immensely

powerful the instant it is incorporated in a person who becomes a hero to others.

As there are good and bad men in the flesh, each group wielding enormous influence, so we must imagine that there are both good and bad personalities in the spirit world, beyond the sphere of our present senses. We cannot deny that they may have the same relative influence upon us that men have while in the body. Beyond this is the legitimate conception that men and women are not the only creatures in God's universe; and these too may have the choice between good and evil. If so they too may have the varied influence upon us which men who are good and men who are bad now have upon us in this visible world.

With such thoughts in mind we may turn again to think of "the evil one," or Satan. The idea for which Satan stands is that evil is organized. It has vigorous and ingenious leadership. But the one idea which the Church combats in its creeds, and in its chief teachers always, is that Satan is not God's rival. The Hebrews were at one time exposed to Persian dualism; and dualism has again and again attacked the weaker minds of the Church. It must

always be guarded against. God is almighty. There is neither matter nor personality beyond His power. He is the universal Creator who is omnipotent from eternity to eternity. Satan can be admitted to be only a disobedient servant.

The safest exegesis is the inclusive interpretation, which would mean evil in any possible form. Evil is so deadly a foe that we must call God to protect us from it in whatever guise it may attack us. When temptation gives us our chance to quit us like men, evil stands always at the gate of victory. We must be swift to detect the evil, in whatever likeness it may seek to trap us,— whether hideous and evident, or charming and disguised; whether as the abstruse theory of a false philosophy or as the plausible manner of a magnetic man; whether in the voices of living men or in the intangible forces emanating from a vanished humanity; whether from bad men, seen or unseen, or from the personal powers of darkness which are not human at all. The soul must be on its guard against every imaginable source of defeat, with unresting vigilance and with unlimited imagination.

When one has thus convinced oneself of the in-

soluble mystery of evil, when one knows how absurdly inadequate even the strongest human weapons are for such a far-flung warfare as this, then one must cry out for the aid of Him who is Master of absolutely all the forces of the universe, personal and impersonal. If the insidious influence of evil reaches up into the personal and the spiritual, then we must all have the help of the Supreme Person and the Supreme Spirit—God. Our prayer for deliverance lets Him do for us what we know that He longs to do for us,—we are tried as by fire, we are tempted as Job was allowed to be tempted, we are loved as Job was loved, and we are saved by a victory more complete than Job's, a victory akin to that which our Lord Christ won when He demonstrated that humanity can be synonymous with perfection. However we have failed, however we may fail again, in that moment at least we have shared His triumph.

v

We must recall that we are not beseeching God for deliverance one by one; we are standing shoulder to shoulder, as members one of another, con-

scious of a brotherhood which includes every human being; we are praying God that together we may escape evil, seen or unseen.

In this century we have had the most stupendous example in history of the need of organization to combat evil. Evil theories, evil philosophies, evil pride, evil ambitions, showing themselves in haughty, selfish, and cruel men, sought the enslavement of a world which was without organization, without plan. A disaster world-wide seemed imminent. Then the men who had good instincts saw that no sacrifice of personal or national preference was too great that the world might be organized on its righteous side. The free nations were brought to one mind for the sake of liberty and righteousness. Just as armies rushed against armies, so spiritual forces were arrayed against spiritual forces. The seen and the unseen were in battle array. No nation dared to pray, "Deliver me from the power of the enemy"; but the nations together cried, "Deliver us all from the evil that is organized against us."

Today, the war being over, we see a world again falling apart. One danger is past; but selfish and

unscrupulous groups are drawing off to plot villainy in every corner of the globe. The danger is great. God is today allowing a whole world to be tempted. We are rightly pale with terror. The risk of failure is awful. God's ultimate victory is assured; but it is increasingly doubtful whether this generation or even this whole age shall be part of the victory. To share in God's victory, we must stand together, we must recognize our brotherhood, we must resist as organized humanity the organized forces of evil. You know the organized forces of evil in every city, in every nation. They may be summarized under the titles of immorality, or worldliness, or uncompromising selfishness, or political corruption. Organized righteousness must win God's power to overcome this organized evil.

Righteousness has once for all been divinely organized by the Lord Jesus Christ. His Church is the only visible means by which all men everywhere may act as one body to cause the utter collapse of evil. The men who criticize the Church as petty should bring to it their breadth; the men who accuse it of meanness should bring to it their generosity; the men who say that it is unbusinesslike

should bring to it their skill; the men who think it timid should bring to it their courage; the men who feel that it is prejudiced and bigoted should bring to it their candour, their truth, and their freedom; the men who believe it self-centred and complacent should bring to it their sacrifice, their humility, their love. Men crazed but good go wildly into the building of organizations which at best can be only partial and local. Here is a God-made institution ready at hand,—beset, it is true, with the weakness and failure which attach to all things made of human material, but fused, also, with the strength and the inevitable success which attach to everything which is of God.

When we pray, "Deliver us from evil," we are humanity at one, crying to God for the victory which belongs to both God and man. We are humanity consciously filled with the leadership and the life of Christ. We are His Church in all the world: we are His body; as such we are indomitable. We are—in Him and through Him—humanity perfectly organized; acting as one man; fearless and loving; dying to live; the victor of evil; entering at last the victory of God.

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